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Escape from Cuba

A Novel of Survival, Revolution, and One Man's Journey to Freedom

Michel Mir Jorge
Edited and translated by Tim Trott

"When men stop fearing death, dictatorships end."

— from Escape from Cuba

Tim Trott Publishing
TimTrottWrites.com
Also available in Spanish

Book at a Glance

Title	Escape from Cuba
Subtitle	A Novel of Survival, Revolution, and One Man's Journey to Freedom
Author	Michel Mir Jorge
Editor / English translation	Tim Trott
Publisher	Tim Trott Publishing
Genre	Political thriller; literary fiction inspired by real events
Setting	Contemporary Cuba: Havana, Guanabacoa, the eastern provinces, Guantánamo, and the port of Mariel
Length	Approximately 61,000 words; 26 chapters
Languages	English; Spanish edition also available
Publication date	April 21, 2025
Formats	Paperback and Ebook
ISBN	978-1-967047-10-9 and 978-1-967047-11-6
Retail price	$15.95 / $4.95
Page count	198
Available at	Amazon, B&N, Kobo, etc.
Website	TimTrottWrites.com

Escape from Cuba is a work of fiction. While inspired by actual events, its characters, dialog, and specific incidents are products of the author's imagination.

Tagline and Short Description

Tagline

One man who refuses to stay silent. One officer who wants him broken. And an island where telling the truth is a crime.

One-Sentence Pitch

A young Havana dissident, hunted for years by a corrupt state-security officer, becomes a CIA asset inside the very smuggling network that officer runs, and must expose it before he can escape the island alive.

Short Description (about 150 words)

In Havana, speaking your mind can cost you everything. Alberto Mendieta Ramos is young, proud, and reckless enough to say out loud what everyone else only whispers: that the freedom the Mambises fought for never truly arrived. That makes him a target.

Lieutenant Erasmo of Cuban counterintelligence is assigned his case, and what begins as routine surveillance becomes a years-long obsession. Through arrests, prison, a desperate escape into the hills, and a fragile attempt at an ordinary life, Alberto cannot shake the man in the blue Lada, or the country that will not let him breathe.

When an unexpected offer from American intelligence arrives, Alberto has one chance to strike back at the regime from the inside. But the network he is sent to infiltrate leads straight to Erasmo, and the only way out of Cuba runs through the sea.

Extended Synopsis

(Suitable for reviewers and interviewers. Major ending details are withheld.)

Alberto Mendieta Ramos is the kind of young man Cuba's state security notices. He is strong, charming, unafraid, and he talks openly in the street about Cuba's nineteenth-century independence fighters and the freedom they never got to see. When his file lands on the desk of Erasmo, an ambitious counterintelligence lieutenant, the officer senses a case that could make his career.

A detention for counterrevolution turns into a nightmare at the notorious 100 y Aldabó detention center. Alberto's mother, Antonia, camps in the prison courtyard and refuses to leave without seeing her son, while Nemesio, an old revolutionary disillusioned with what he fought for, tries to pull strings. Once released, Alberto is drawn into an underground resistance group whose members know that most of them will not survive. A late-night act of violence to save a young woman from two police officers makes him a fugitive, and a chase across Havana sends him into the hills, living on green mangoes and stagnant water while search parties close in.

Recaptured, Alberto is sent to the Eastern Combined prison. There, among overcrowded cells and men labeled common thieves for political offenses, he meets Esmeikel, a militant whose network of graffiti and protest, reaching all the way to the exile community in Miami, ends in a manhunt across Havana.

Meanwhile, Erasmo is changing. Promoted, drinking hard, and skimming money from his operations, he uncovers a cocaine route running from the eastern provinces to Havana, and rather than shut it down, he takes control of it. By the time a papal-visit amnesty puts Alberto back on the street, his old pursuer has become a colonel and a kingpin.

Alberto tries to build a quiet life. He works on a dairy farm, survives a failed romance, marries Rosalba, the woman he truly loves, and becomes a father. But a new constitution and fresh crackdowns rekindle the fire in him, and one day he is detained, interrogated by people who are clearly not Cuban, and offered a deal by the CIA. His condition: his wife and daughter must reach American soil first.

Working undercover as a truck driver for Erasmo's network, Alberto photographs what moves through the ports, including cargo that is not drugs at all. Gravely wounded and forced to play along with the men who nearly killed him, he gathers evidence that reaches the highest levels of the Party and the military. When a cocaine shipment from Mariel is seized in the Panama Canal, the entire island turns into a net, and Alberto's

final escape through the mangroves, under a helicopter's searchlight, will cost him dearly.

Principal Characters

- **Alberto Mendieta Ramos:** A young habanero who will not keep quiet. Proud, impulsive, and decent at heart, he grows from a loud street dissident into a disciplined operative with everything to lose.
- **Erasmo:** A counterintelligence officer who rises from lieutenant to colonel. His pursuit of Alberto runs parallel to his own slide into drink, corruption, and a drug empire he cannot control.
- **Antonia:** Alberto's mother, who has what she calls an "allergy to injustice" and refuses to be turned away at any prison gate.
- **Nemesio:** An old revolutionary who fought in the mountains and now watches, with rum and resignation, as the dream falls apart.
- **Esmeikel:** A resistance leader Alberto meets in prison, whose motto gives the book its spine: when men are not afraid to die, dictatorships fall.
- **Rosalba:** The woman Alberto loves, and later his wife; the reason he tries to settle down and the reason he finally acts.
- **Negro:** Alberto's steadfast friend from the dairy farm, loyal to the very end.
- **Daniel:** A young Guantánamo officer whom Erasmo buys with cash, and who proves more cunning than his patron.
- **Natalia:** A woman from Erasmo's private life who becomes a decisive player in the endgame.

Themes and Talking Points

- **Fear as the regime's real weapon.** The novel's central idea is that a dictatorship survives on fear, and loses its grip the moment people stop being afraid.
- **The informant state.** From neighborhood CDR watchers to surveillance cameras on Havana street corners, the book shows how ordinary life is shaped by being watched and reported on.
- **Political prisoners hidden as common criminals.** Characters serving twenty years for "stealing bananas" illustrate how dissent is erased from official records.
- **Corruption at the top.** Erasmo's arc traces how the guardians of the revolution profit from the very crimes they are supposed to stop.
- **The cost to families.** Mothers at prison gates, wives sent ahead into exile, and children growing up without fathers carry the weight of each act of defiance.
- **A story written from lived experience.** The author was deported back to Cuba after his first escape attempt, later crossed twelve countries by land to reach freedom, and now writes from exile.
- **A bilingual publication.** Written in Spanish and brought into English through a close author–editor partnership, with endnotes that explain Cuban terms, places, and history for English-language readers.

About the Author

Michel Mir Jorge

Michel Mir Jorge was born in Guanabacoa, a small suburb of Havana, Cuba. From an early age he loved literature almost as much as he loved the idea of his country's freedom, and he came to understand the world through books rather than through Communist Party propaganda.

The story of *Escape from Cuba* took shape after his own first attempt to leave the island. He crossed eight countries and traveled more than 2,000 miles by road, boat, and jungle, only to be deported from Mexico back to Cuba. For years afterward the government barred him from leaving, informing him through an agent that he was "regulated." Four years later he got out, this time to Suriname, where he lived for almost two years. Unable to settle there, partly because of Cuba's influence in local politics, he set out once more, crossing twelve countries by land.

Today he writes from exile, convinced that words are the best weapons a people have, and that men are rescued one by one, not en masse as politicians and strongmen would have us believe.

Short Bio

Michel Mir Jorge was born in Guanabacoa, Cuba. After being deported back to the island following his first escape attempt, he eventually crossed twelve countries by land to reach freedom. He now writes from exile. *Escape from Cuba* is his first novel.

About the Editor and Translator

Tim Trott

Tim Trott is a published fiction and nonfiction author, the host of the YouTube interview podcast @AuthorToAuthor, and the founder of Tim Trott Publishing. Based in the Daytona Beach, Florida area, he brought *Escape from Cuba* from its original Spanish into English, working closely with the author over many revisions. His own work, including *The E-Team*, *Psychic Barista*, *Short Stories*, and the Star Child books, as well as several nonfiction titles, is available at TimTrottWrites.com.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cuban Exile Michel Mir Jorge Releases *Escape from Cuba*, a Political Thriller Drawn from a Life Lived Under Surveillance

A dissident, a corrupt counterintelligence officer, and a CIA operation collide in a novel written by a man who knows what it costs to leave the island

Tim Trott Publishing announces the release of *Escape from Cuba: A Novel of Survival, Revolution, and One Man's Journey to Freedom* by Cuban-born author Michel Mir Jorge, edited and translated into English by Tim Trott. The novel is available in English and Spanish.

Set in contemporary Havana and the island's eastern provinces, *Escape from Cuba* follows Alberto Mendieta Ramos, a young man whose refusal to stay silent puts him in the sights of Erasmo, an ambitious state-security officer. Over the years that follow, Alberto endures detention, prison, and life as a fugitive, while Erasmo climbs the ranks and quietly takes over a cocaine pipeline he was meant to destroy. When the CIA recruits Alberto to infiltrate that network, hunter and hunted meet again, and the evidence Alberto gathers threatens the highest levels of the regime.

Mir Jorge, who was born in Guanabacoa, wrote the story after his first attempt to escape Cuba ended with deportation from Mexico. Barred from leaving for years, he later lived in Suriname before crossing twelve countries by land to reach freedom. "My writing is my small contribution to the cause of freedom wherever that struggle takes place," he says.

Although a work of fiction, the novel draws on the textures of real Cuban life: neighborhood informants, prisons such as 100 y Aldabó, the blackout of dissent in official records, and the daily improvisation required to survive. Endnotes throughout explain Cuban history, slang, and institutions for English-language readers.

Mir Jorge's next novel, *Suriname Under Cover*, continues Alberto's story as a CIA operative in Paramaribo.

About the book: *Escape from Cuba* by Michel Mir Jorge. Tim Trott Publishing. ISBN 978-1-967047-10-9 and 978-1-967047-11-6. Paperback ($15.95) and Ebook ($4.95). Available at Amazon and other online bookstores.

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Suggested Interview Questions

For Michel Mir Jorge

- How much of Alberto's journey comes from your own experience, and where did you deliberately depart from it?
- You were deported from Mexico back to Cuba after crossing eight countries. What was that return like, and how did it shape this book?
- What does it mean in Cuba to be told you are "regulated"?
- Esmeikel's line, "When men are not afraid to die, dictatorships fall," runs through the novel. Where does that idea come from for you?
- Erasmo is a villain, but he is also lonely, frightened, and human. Why was it important to write him from the inside?
- The book shows political prisoners recorded as common criminals. Is that drawn from what you saw or heard?
- What do you want American readers, and Cuban readers in exile, to take away from the story?
- You say men are rescued one by one, not en masse. What do you mean by that?
- What can readers expect from Alberto in Suriname Under Cover?

For Tim Trott

- How did this collaboration with Michel begin?
- What were the biggest challenges in carrying Cuban Spanish, slang, and humor into English?
- Why did you choose to include endnotes rather than explain Cuban terms within the text?
- What did you learn about Cuba while working on the book that surprised you?

Excerpt

From Chapter One, "Whispers of Rebellion"

There was talk of a dangerous man, a man lacking the revolutionary ideals that a Cuban citizen was supposed to defend. This is how they presented it: among a pile of papers, messy on the table. His name and photo immediately stood out.

Lieutenant García picked up the file, looked at the photo, and quickly put it back on the table.

"This one's different," he murmured to his colleague, wiping his palms on his uniform.

Alberto Mendieta Ramos was tall and strong, with jet-black hair and eyes, and thick, well-defined eyebrows. He styled his hair just by running his hand through it, leaving furrows like tracks. His sun-bronzed skin complemented his broad shoulders, narrow waist, and powerful legs. He walked with the resolve of a Viking. He had fleeting love affairs, relationships where morality had yet to mix with the bitterness and ill temper of age. His greatest flaw, immense and foolish, was speaking out against the government without fear or filter. He spoke of "his" Mambises as if they belonged to him. With fervor, he recounted how the Mambises crossed the island, fighting a massive Spanish army to win Cuba's freedom: freedom that had never truly arrived, but which, according to him, would one day come. And he would be there.

That youth, that tenacity for his people, despite his young age and much pride. Alberto understood that what mattered wasn't how long one lived, but how. Not in material terms, but by the purity of soul with which one coexisted. That light compelled decency and integrity. But men did not know how to be as good as they were evil.

"Boy," said the boss to his subordinate, dressed in a green uniform. "This is your case."

Erasmo's coffee cup clinked on the saucer.

The first step was routine: knock on the door of the CDR and ask the resident about the subject. But as Erasmo climbed to the second floor, his footsteps echoed in silence. Behind the doors, you could hear televisions turning down and half-interrupted conversations.

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Coming Next: Suriname Under Cover

In the sweltering heat of Paramaribo, Alberto, now operating as Ernesto Molina and at the bottom of a bottle, is pulled back into the shadowy world he thought he had left behind. Tasked with infiltrating the inner circle of Yúnior Cordero, a key player in propaganda and drug trafficking, he works alongside a reluctant local informant and a jaded ex-Cuban cop in a city where loyalty is as fluid as the Suriname River.

Expected publication: [Insert date or “forthcoming”]

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Available on Request

- High-resolution front cover (JPG/PNG) and full print cover
- Author photograph of Michel Mir Jorge
- Review copies (eBook and print) in English or Spanish
- Interviews with the author (Spanish; English via translator) and with Tim Trott
- Additional excerpts